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SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO):  
REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE AD HOC LONG RANGE  
IDENTIFICATION AND TRACKING(LRIT) GROUP OF THE MARITIME  
SAFETY COMMITTEE, LONDON, 29 JANUARY - 1 FEBRUARY 2008.

¶1. SUMMARY: The ad hoc LRIT group met from 29 January to 1 February under the chairmanship of Dr. Sam Ryan (Canada), who at the opening session was elected as Chairman for the present and subsequent sessions. The group was convened by MSC 83, under MSC circular letter 2835, to consider necessary amendments to the LRIT technical specifications and standards, to consider test programs for LRIT, and to witness and accept LRIT tests. As this was the first meeting of the group, inputs and discussion centered on the details of LRIT communications and the international LRIT data exchange. All technical inputs to this session were submitted by the U.S. and all U.S. objectives were met. END SUMMARY.

¶2. The group adopted as its agenda the provisional agenda set out in MSC/ad hoc LRIT 1/1. Only three other papers were submitted to this session, all by the United States. The United States is developing the international LRIT data exchange which is the heart of the LRIT system. U.S. contributions to the group are therefore critical. MSC/ad hoc LRIT 1/3 was on U.S. clarifications and assumptions regarding the LRIT technical specifications. MSC/ad hoc LRIT 1/3/1 proposed U.S. amendments to the LRIT technical specifications. MSC/ad hoc LRIT 1/3/2 was a detailed schema of proposed LRIT message formats.

¶3. During previous sessions of the committee, a number of contracting governments, including the USG, had indicated their intentions to establish a national LRIT data center. The IMO Secretariat advised the group that an official notification in this matter is required. The U.S. Coast Guard will provide an official notification to the IMO Secretariat.

¶4. The group, based on the U.S. input documents, prepared draft proposed amendments to the technical specifications and, building on the U.S. message formats document MSC/ad hoc LRIT 1/3/2, prepared extensible markup language (xml) schema for LRIT communications. The secretariat, as the developer of the LRIT data distribution plan (DDP), prepared a matrix of guidelines for the implementation of the DDP. Notwithstanding its terms of reference, the group agreed to prepare for the consideration of the committee draft amendments to the approved LRIT performance standards.

¶5. The group also considered related issues for the timely establishment of the LRIT system. This discussion focused on the approval of shipboard equipment, notably shipboard equipment already fitted that may meet LRIT performance standards, e.g., GMDSS INMARSAT-C. The group agreed that this issue should be brought to the attention of MSC 84.

¶6. The next session of the group is scheduled for 11-14 March 2008 in London at a venue yet to be determined.

¶7. The report of the group will be forwarded to MSC 84 to be noted, with the final session of the group to be sent for approval.

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